

Remarks

Claims 1-4; and 7-12 are currently pending in this application. Claim 1 is independent.

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 8-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and claims 1-4 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claim 1 has been amended to introduce the limitation that the means for moving the piston to draw fluid from the container to the outlet is "a separable connector". Basis for this amendment can be found at paragraphs [0019] and [0020] of the application as published. Claims 2 and 3 have been switched to correct the antecedent basis problem in claim 4. Claims 5, 6 and 13 have been cancelled. Finally, minor revisions have been made to the claims to overcome the objections raised in paragraph 1 of the Office Action.

Applicant hereby submits the above amendments in response to the rejections in the outstanding final Office Action. Applicant respectfully requests they be entered and the rejections withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 8-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

In contrast to the present invention, none of the cited documents disclose a separable connector for moving the piston against the action of the spring to enable fluid to be drawn from the container past the piston and through the outlet.

De Visscher (US Patent No. 3,777,771) discloses a valve as part of a mechanism for joining together two parts of two containers containing fluids at identical or different pressures. The valve is designed primarily for diving applications. De Visscher does not disclose a valve that provides access to a supply of drinking water retained in a portable flexible container, nor does De Visscher disclose a separable connector which enables fluid to be drawn between the containers.

Forsman et al (US Patent No. 6,497,348) discloses a hydration system that includes a fluid reservoir configured to store fluid and a tube assembly that is coupled to the reservoir to deliver fluid to a user's mouth. The system is primarily designed for sports application. Forsman et al does not disclose a valve mechanism, nor does Forsman et al disclose a separable connector which enables fluid to be drawn through a valve. Applicant believes that the above amendments, if entered, would place the application in condition for allowance.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Unlike the prior art, the present invention has been designed specifically for military application. The valve mechanism as claimed is able to be used in hostile environments and particularly in environments where, without proper protection, contamination of water with harmful and dangerous chemicals is highly likely. A separable connector allows quick and easy access to fluid within the container. Moreover, a separable connector ensures that the water container is sealed right up to the point at which the conduit is attached a face mask of the user.

A separable connector also provides advantages in military applications through a reduction in space and weight of the water container which has to be transported in the field.

De Visscher identifies the problem of pressure differentials but neither De Visscher nor Forsman et al identify, and neither have been developed to overcome, the problem of both spillage and contamination of the water by poisonous substances. Consequently it is submitted that there would be no motivation to modify the valve of De Visscher or the system of Forsman et al to provide a unit in accordance with claim 1 of the present invention.

Furthermore, even if a skilled person were to modify the invention of De Visscher to apply it a drinking container, the teaching of Forsman et al would not combine to lead the skilled person to the solution of the present invention.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests that the above amendments be entered and favorable reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-4, 7-12 is solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

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